Undergraduate Course:
POLI 371: Civil Wars

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Course Description

Civil wars typically endure for decades. When they end with a negotiated settlement, the agreements we observe fail to promote, let alone, ensure peace. In fact, many of today's civil wars are lasting longer (Fazal and Poast, 2019). Recent spikes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia, Philippines, and Myanmar, among others, show few signs of abating despite the number of comprehensive peace agreements. More importantly, civil wars that end in peace agreements tend to resort back to armed conflict sooner than those without them (Fazal and Poast, 2019). While scholars and policymakers once argued that greater provisions and stronger agreements would produce a longer peace between former violent foes, empirically we observe something different happening. As a result, the issue of civil conflict has become a grave concern of policy makers and political scientists alike.

In this course, we will examine and think critically about a set of substantive questions on civil wars:

- Why do civil wars occur? Under what conditions are we more likely to observe violent intergroup conflict?
- Why do some insurgents/incumbents utilize the strategies they do?
- What are the challenges for conflict management and resolution? Why do civil wars recur?
- What enduring consequences do civil wars have for post-conflict environments?

Each student will have the opportunity to understand the scientific study of civil wars. Each student will not only study these topics theoretically, but also empirically. Moreover, each student will study one on-going civil war in depth throughout the semester. This will allow the students to pull together the various concepts and theoretical frameworks learned in this class. It is important to note that this course is not about any particular civil war(s). Rather, the course is

devoted to explaining the causes, conduct, termination and resolution of civil wars in general. We will draw on examples from many different conflicts, such as civil wars in Afghanistan, El Salvador, Cameroon, and Nepal.

Office Hours

Remote office hours will be conducted via Zoom. Because of the current environment, my hours will be flexible. To schedule a meeting, please email me. Upon confirmation of our meeting I will send you the zoom link.

Required Materials

Because this course will be taught remotely, students must have a working computer with a video camera, speaker and a microphone, and a working internet connection that allows them to be on video. Students should test their equipment before joining class. Undergraduate students should contact the Dean of Undergraduates if they have concerns about meeting this requirement. If your computer/phone has no webcam/microphone, which are needed to complete some assignments, please let the instructor know as soon as possible and [contact the Dean of Undergraduates if you need to request support via the Access and Opportunity Portal (HTTPS://AOP.RICE.EDU/APPLICATION) or request to borrow one from the Digital Media Commons].

The readings for this course will consist of several journal articles. All of the journal articles listed in the required reading below are available online in databases accessible through the Fondren Library. From the library website (http://library.rice.edu), search "Journals" for the desired title and navigate to the correct volume and issue. If you are accessing the library website from off campus, you will need to enter your Rice Net ID to obtain access. For some class sessions, I will assign journal articles from your respective fields to understand the similarities and differences between the political science approach to understanding civil wars and the approaches of its sister institutions across the social sciences. These will all be posted on CANVAS.

I would like to stress that some of the materials presented may be technically or theoretically challenging. Some of the theoretical arguments utilize advanced statistics or formal models. However, I do not expect any of you to have any background in either statistics or formal modeling. My main concern is not in the technical details. Rather, my goal is for you to understand how research is designed to answer important questions. I also hope that you are able to develop an intuitive understanding of the central arguments and conclusions and for you to be able to explain them. These skills are transferable across a number of industries and at the very least will make you a better critical thinker.

Course Objectives

The most important goal of the course is to impart to students a solid understanding of theories and empirical evidence regarding the causes, conduct, termination, resolution, recurrence, and legacies of civil wars. Specifically, I expect students to acquire the following abilities:

- Ability to identify and critically evaluate different theories of civil wars.

- Ability to understand and critically evaluate different research designs for examining questions of civil wars.
- Ability to effectively communicate in writing and verbally one's deliverables to any audience.
- Ability to observe some phenomena and determine what we do and do not know about it, how we can examine it scientifically, and what its implications are for the real world.

I hope the course can help students develop analytical and critical reading skills and writing abilities. Again, I cannot stress how transferable these skills are for any career path a student seeks to take. These goals will be achieved by reading the required materials, discussing them in class, and writing/presenting on assigned topics.

Course Structure

First 10 minutes will be a summary discussion of the readings related to a present day civil war. Then we will discuss our theoretical understanding and empirical evidence within our readings. We will end class with Q&A. The course will be a mix of lecture and class discussion.

Assessments

It is your responsibility to finish the assigned readings before coming to class (unless specified otherwise), to attend and participate in all class meetings, to write and turn in written assignments on time, and take exams as scheduled.

Your final grade in the course will be determined as follows (each is discussed in more details below):

- (1) Attendance and participation: 20%
- (2) Response paper/Group Presentation 1: Causes of Civil War (3 pages - 10 minutes) **Due Week 5**: 15%
- (3) Response paper/Group Presentation 2: Rebel and/or Incumbent Strategies (3 pages - 10 minutes) **Due Week 8**: 15%
- (4) Response paper/Group Presentation 3: Civil War Termination and/or Recurrence (3 pages - 10 minutes) **Due Week 10**: 15%
- (5) Response paper/Group Presentation 4: Post-Conflict State-building/Contemporary Topics (3 pages - 10 minutes) **Due Week 14**: 15%
- (6) Final Exam (Take Home) 20%

Attendance and Participation AP

AP means showing up for class, exhibiting evidence of having done the assigned readings, and participating in class discussions. The class participation grade is based on the quality of contribution to the class, not necessarily the quantity. One must aim to contribute something of interest to the discussion on a regular basis. The aim is to have productive intellectual conversations. Too much contribution, crowding out of other opinions, uncivil comments and diatribes will count against you. You are responsible for all materials covered during any class period missed, and for handing in all assignments on time regardless.

All students who live four or fewer time zones away, are expected to attend every class via Zoom. All students who are living where the time zone is >4 hrs from the central time zone are expected to either attend class via Zoom or to work out in advance with the instructor a suitable solution for asynchronous attendance. Students attending class via Zoom are expected to arrive to class on time (e.g., within 5 minutes of start time). This is essential because links/docs posted in the Chat window and are only available to students who are present at the time the links are posted. Links will not be reposted to accommodate students who arrive late.

Zoom Etiquette

Students are expected to make a meaningful contribution by reviewing the assigned literature, citing all sources appropriately, and having an argument that organizes the paper/presentation/final exam throughout. To do this, please keep your video camera on and microphone muted. Use the [chat, raise hand, unmute, etc.] when you have questions or would like to participate. Students needing an accommodation for using their camera or microphone should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss and work out needed adjustments. * In this course, students are expected to work in groups. Students should use screen-share software, Google docs, Zoom breakouts, portable white boards, etc. if they need to view other students' work. Students should discuss with their teammates how to contribute to group work.

FERPA and Zoom

In line with FERPA REQUIREMENTS, recorded classroom discussions involving students will be available only to students officially registered and enrolled in the class. If you have concerns about appearing on these recordings, please contact the instructor ahead of time. Some instructors may desire or plan to use recordings from this class for another purpose. In such situations, and in line with FERPA REQUIREMENTS, the instructor may ask students to consider signing individualized consent forms. Students who do not provide written consent must be deidentified and/or omitted from all recordings.

Absence Policies

Students' participation is vital to this course and it is impossible to participate if you are not in attendance. I expect no to few absences in this course and I would encourage you to contact me should any circumstances arise that may preclude you from attending. If for whatever reason, you cannot attend class it is your responsibility to gather notes from your classmates. Moreover, it's in your best interest to let me know upfront if this will not be the only class you miss. Do

not hesitate to do this. It is much better for your performance and overall grade to communicate any issues with me than not to. Details need not be specified.

Format and Grading of Assignments

Students may choose two topics for response papers and two topics for presentations. This is to advance your writing and oral presentation skills. Knowing how to communicate via both platforms is critically important to your success within and outside of college. It is also important to understand where your strengths lie - you always want to work on your weaknesses, but play to your strengths. The only paper that will not be presentation-optional is the final exam.

Formatting for written assignments: Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments must be typed, double spaced and paginated, with font size of 12 points. All pages must have a 1 inch margin all around. Be sure to use proper spelling and grammar, and to provide appropriate citations when necessary. Written work that does not conform to the format requirements will be subject to 10% reduction of the grade.

Formatting for presentation assignments: Unless otherwise specified, all presentations will begin with an anecdote, what is puzzling about that anecdote, the research question that has been asked to understand the puzzle, and what solutions have been offered to solve the puzzle. Students are to stay within the 10 minute time frame. Work that does not conform to the format requirements will be subject to 10% reduction of the grade.

For both the written and presentation assignments, citations/sources are critically important. You need to know not only where you get your information from, but whether the source is a proper one that is providing you with valid information. If you decide the source and its information is valid you may utilize the source's information for your own work; however, you must credit that source accordingly. All response papers as well as presentations should include in-text citations (Author-Year format) and a bibliography at the end (in alphabetical order).

Assignments due: Late papers/presentations will be accepted with a 10% penalty per 24-hour period unless the student has communicated with me prior to the delayed submission. Again, if for whatever reason there is something obstructing you from completing your assignment it is better to communicate with me than not.

Rice Honor Code

In this course, all students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. If you are unfamiliar with the details of this code and how it is administered, you should consult the Honor System Handbook at http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/. This handbook outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of your academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process.

Disability Services

If you have a documented disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should: 1) make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Support Services (Allen

Center, Room 111 / adarice@rice.edu / x5841) to determine the accommodations you need; and 2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.

Title IX

At Rice University, unlawful discrimination in any form, including sexual misconduct, is prohibited under Rice Policy on Harassment and Sexual Harassment (Policy 830) and the Student Code of Conduct. Please be aware that all employees of Rice University are mandatory reporters, which means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must share that information with the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to make that notification, you will control how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. To report sexual harassment, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@rice.edu. To explore supportive measures and other resources that are available to you, please visit the Office if Interpersonal Misconduct Prevention and Support at https://safe.rice.edu.

The Center for Written, Oral, and Visual Communication (CWOVC)

If you have concerns about your writing, I strongly recommend you to take advantage of the resources provided by CWOVC. CWOVC is located on the 2nd floor mezzanine of Fondren Library. You are encouraged to make appointments with the consultants via the Center's website at http://cwovc.rice.edu/ for your assignments in this course. The consultants will provide feedback on topics such as the organization and efficiency of your paper or your presentation, the coherence and consistence of your arguments, and the appropriateness of your sentence structure and grammar. However, if you have difficulty coordinating a session with CWOVC, please speak to me as I am happy to help you improve your communication skills.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change.

Week 1

Question: What is a civil war? How do civil wars differ from other wars (e.g. interstate war)?

- Goal 1 Understand how course is structured
- Goal 2 Learn how to read effectively and efficiently
  - Green, Amelia Hoover "How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps" https://calgara.github.io/Pol157_Spring2019/howtoread.pdf
- Goal 3 Understand core features of civil wars and how/whether they differ from interstate wars
  - Staton JK, Moore WH. 2011. "Judicial power in domestic and international politics." *International Organization* 65(Summer):553–87.
  - Lake, David A. 2003. "International Relations Theory and Internal Conflict: Insights from the Interstices." *International Studies Review* 5(4): 81-89

Week 2

Question: Why do civil wars occur? How do civil wars differ from other wars (e.g. interstate war)?

- Goal 1 Understand greed & grievances frameworks
  - Collier, Paul and Anke Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56: 563-595.
  - Zeynep et al. 2011. "Why do civil wars occur? Another look at the theoretical dichotomy of opportunity versus grievance" *Review of International Studies* 37(5): 2627-2650.
  - Buhaug, Halvard, Lars-Erik Cederman and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2014. "Square Pegs in Round Holes. Inequalities, Grievances, and Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* 58, 418-341.

Week 3

Question: Why do civil wars occur? How do civil wars differ from other wars (e.g. interstate war)?

- Goal 1 Understand Fearon's (1995) rationalist framework
  - Fearon James D. 1995. "Rationalist explanations for war." *International Organization*. 49(3):379–414.

  - We will spend the entire week on this framework. It has been extensively applied throughout the civil war literature - in some cases, incorrectly. It forms the foundation of much of the civil war literature we will read throughout the semester. Please read this piece carefully and keep track of the assumptions Fearon makes, whether it can be applied to all civil wars, and under what conditions he expects the onset of war.

Week 4

Question: Why do civil wars occur? How do civil wars differ from other wars (e.g. interstate war)?

- Goal 1 Understand whether ethnicity matters
  - Fearon James D. and David D. Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War." *American Political Science Review*, 97:75-90.
  - Wucherpfennig, Julian, Nils Metternich, Lars-Erik Cederman, and Kristian S. Gleditsch. 2012. 'Ethnicity, the State and the Duration of Civil War'. *World Politics* 64(1):79-115
- Goal 2 Understand Ideology
  - Gutiérrez-Sanin, Francisco and Elisabeth Jean Wood. 2014. "Ideology in Civil War: Instrumental Adoption and Beyond." *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 213-226

Weeks 5 and 6

********** **First Assignment Due Week 5** **********
Question: Under what conditions do insurgents utilize varying forms of violence, particularly selective/indiscriminate violence?

- Goal 1 Understand varying violent strategies and their potential causes
  - Wood, Elisabeth and Francisco Gutiérrez Sanín. 2017. "What Should We Mean by 'Pattern of Political Violence'? Repertoire, Targeting, Frequency, and Technique." *Perspectives on Politics* 15(1): 20-41.
  - Wood, Elisabeth and Mara Revkin. (online first). "The Islamic State's Pattern of Sexual Violence: Ideology and Institutions, Policies and Practices." *Journal of Global Security Studies*, forthcoming (online).
- Goal 2 Understand whether violence is strategic
  - Kalyvas, Stathis N. and Laia Balcells. 2010. "International System and Technologies of Rebellion: How the End of the Cold War Shaped Internal Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 415-429.
  - Polo, SMT. and Gleditsch, KS., 2016. "Twisting arms and sending messages: Terrorist tactics in civil war." *Journal of Peace Research*. 53 (6), 815-829
- Goal 3 Understand use of terrorism during civil war
  - Polo, SMT. and Gonzalez, B., 2020. "The Power to Resist: Mobilization and the Logic of Terrorist Attacks in Civil War." *Comparative Political Studies*

Week 7

Question: Why do rebels divert critical resources to engage in governance strategies? Under what conditions do insurgents engage in governance?

- Goal 1 Understand what rebel governance is
  - Florea, A. 2018. "Authority Contestation during and after Civil War." *Perspectives on Politics*.
- Goal 2 Understand why rebels engage in governance
  - Stewart, Megan. 2018. "Civil War as State Building." *International Organization*. 72:1.
- Goal 3 Understand how governance and violence are related
  - Heger, Lindsay L., Danielle F. Jung, and Wendy H. Wong. 2017. "Linking Nonstate Governance and Violence." *Journal of Global Security Studies*. 2(3): 220-36.

Week 8

********** **Second Assignment Due Week 8** **********
Question: How do we end civil wars? Why do civil wars recur?

- Goal 1 Understand the varying ways civil wars terminate
  - Walter, Barbara. 2013. "The Four Things We Know About How Civil Wars End (and What This Tells Us About Syria.)" *Political Violence @ a Glance*
  - Walter, Barbara F. 1997. "The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement" *International Organization* 51:3, pp. 335-64.
- Goal 2
  - Thomas, Jakana. 2014. "Rewarding Bad Behavior: How Governments Respond to Terrorism in Civil War," *American Journal of Political Science* 58:4; pp. 804-818.

Week 9

Question: How do we end civil wars? Why do civil wars recur?

- Goal 1 Understand why these peace mechanisms fail and civil wars recur
  - Mattes, M. and Savun, B., 2009. "Fostering peace after civil war: Commitment problems and agreement design." *International Studies Quarterly*, 53(3), pp.737-759.
  - Hartzell, Caroline, and Matthew Hoddie. 2003. "Institutionalizing peace: Power sharing and post-civil war conflict management." *American Journal of Political Science* 47(2):318-332.
  - Cederman, Lars.-Erik., Simon Hug, Andreas Schaedel, and Julian Wucherpfennig. 2015. "Territorial Autonomy in the Shadow of Conflict: Too little, Too Late?" *American Political Science Review*, 109(2), 354–370.

Week 10

********** **Third Assignment Due Week 10** **********
Question: How does the international community engage with civil wars? Under what conditions are third-parties likely to intervene?

- Goal 1 Understand varying forms of international intervention, specifically peacekeeping and humanitarian aid
  - Autesserre, Severine. 2009. "Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence and International Intervention." *International Organization* 63(2): 249-80
  - Fortna, Page. 2004. "Does Peacekeeping Keep Peace? International Intervention and the Duration of Peace After Civil War." *International Studies Quarterly* 48(2): 269-92.
  - Matanock, Alia. 2020. "How International Actors Help Enforce Domestic Deals." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23:357-383.

Week 11

Question: What are the causes and consequences of post-conflict institutions?

- Goal 1 Understand post-conflict state-building and rule of law
  - Nils-Christian Bormann et al. 2019. "Power Sharing: Institutions, Behavior, and Peace." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 84—100.
  - Hadfield, Gillian K. and Barry R. Weingast. 2014. "Microfoundations of the Rule of Law." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 17: 21-42.
  - Blair, R. A., Karim, S. M., and Morse, B. S. 2019. "Establishing the rule of law in weak and war-torn states: Evidence from a field experiment with the Liberian national police." *American Political Science Review*, 113(3):641–65.

Week 12

Question: What are the historical legacies of conflict and long-term consequences of civil war?

- Goal 1 Understand historical analysis of civil wars, the long-term consequences of civil war, and what this means for our understanding of civil war
  - Wucherpfennig, Julian, Philipp Hunziker and Lars-Erik Cederman. 2015."Who inherits the state? Colonial rule and postcolonial conflict."*American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 882-898
  - Lazarev, Egor. 2019. "Laws in Conflict: Legacies of War, Gender, and Legal Pluralism in Chechnya." *World Politics* 71(4): 667-709.
  - Busse-Grzymala, Anna. 2020. "Beyond War and Contracts: The Medieval and Religious Roots of the European State." *Annual Review of Political Science* 23: 19-36.

Week 13

Contemporary Topics: Law and Internal Armed Conflict

- Goal 1 Understand where the sub-field of civil wars in political science is going
  - Loyle, C. E. and Binningsbø, H. M. .2018. "Justice during armed conflict: A new dataset on government and rebel strategies." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 62(2):442–466.
  - Ginsburg, Tom. 2019. "Rebel Use of Law and Courts." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 15:495-507. Eck, Kristine. 2014. "The Law of the Land: Communal conflict and legal authority." *Journal of Peace Research*." 1-14.
  - Lake, Milli. 2017. "Building the Rule of War: Post-conflict Institutions and the Micro-Dynamics of Conflict in Eastern DR Congo." *International Organization*

Week 14

********** **Fourth Assignment Due Week 14** **********
Contemporary Topics: Crime, Gender, and Internal Armed Conflict (Please choose 2 articles - either the first or the last 2)

- Goal 1 Understand where the sub-field of civil wars in political science is going
  - Victor H. Asal, R. Karl Rethemeyer, and Eric W. Schoon. 2019. "Crime, Conflict, and the Legitimacy Trade-Off: Explaining Variation in Insurgents' Participation in Crime." *The Journal of Politics*. 81(2): 399–410.
  - Revkin, Mara Redlich. 2020. "What Explains Taxation by Resource-Rich Rebels? Evidence from the Islamic State in Syria." *The Journal of Politics* 82(2): 757–764.
  - Matfess, Hilary and Valerie M. Hudson. "In Plain Sight: The Neglected Linkage between Brideprice and Violent Conflict." *International Security* 42(1): 7-40.
  - Jakana L. Thomas and Kanisha D. Bond. 2015. "Women's Participation in Violent Political Organizations" *American Political Science Review*. 109 (3):488-506.